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UNH Research Finds U.S. Children Growing Up in Smaller Families

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DURHAM, N.H. – American children, especially African American children, are growing up in significantly smaller families than they were 50 years ago, according to new research published by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. The average African American child was one of 6.53 siblings in 1960 and today is one of 3.18.

“Because smaller families may enable parents to devote more resources to each child, the decrease in family size has likely had a positive impact on children’s lives,” said Tony Fahey, professor emeritus in the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice at University College in Dublin, Ireland, who conducted the research. He also noted smaller families might offset the negative impact on children of a single-parent family versus two-parent family.

Fahey maintains that to better understand how family change has affected children’s well-being, the difference between children’s family size and women’s family size must be recognized and studied.

The full report, based on a recent article in Demography, can be found here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/perspective/us-smaller-families> (<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/perspective/us-smaller-families>).

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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